



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

09/879,573

06/12/2001

Chunzhi Wang

PU010130

4744

7590

06/13/2006

JOSEPH S. TRIPOLI
THOMSON MULTIMEDIA LICENSING INC.
2 INDEPENDENCE WAY
P.O. BOX 5312
PRINCETON, NJ 08543-5312

EXAMINER

SALTARELLI, DOMINIC D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2623

DATE MAILED: 06/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/879,573	Applicant(s) WANG ET AL.	
	Examiner Dominic D. Saltarelli	Art Unit 2623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-9,11-14,16-18 and 20-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 11-14,16-18 and 20-22 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-9 and 23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 17, 2006 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed April 17, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

First, applicant argues that Smith does not teach the selection of a future timer period as in the present invention, which relates to display of television program listings for a future time period, asserting that Smith teaches displaying the underlying television programming itself (applicant's remarks, page 10, lines 18-26).

In response, displaying television listings for a future time period is precisely what Smith teaches. While lines 1-6 of paragraph 14 describe allowing a user to select displays of programming available at that time, lines 6-11 state "...and also to advance the guide so that it indicates programmes available for viewing later on the same day and/or days in the future. Indeed it has been

found that the user frequently wishes to view the displays for the days ahead to see what is on and plan their viewing schedule.” [*emphasis added*] This passage is describing the displays of future listings of program guide information in the format shown in fig. 1.

Second, applicant argues that a combination of the teachings found in Abecassis with the combination of Bedard and Smith would not result in the invention found in the present claims, because Abecassis uses the disclosed relevancy factors to customize programming itself and are not used to generate a customized list of programming (applicant’s remarks, page 11, lines 3-14).

In response, the creation of customized lists of programming is not a deficiency of the Bedard and Smith combination, and thus whether the Abecassis reference generates a customized list is not a consideration when considering what the teachings found in Abecassis would suggest to a person of ordinary skill in the art who was in possession of the Bedard and Smith references. The Bedard reference provides a comprehensive means for generating customized lists of suggested television programming which includes incrementing a counter associated with categories and subcategories under which the contents of a watched program fall under (see fig. 2 and col. 4, lines 49-65). Abecassis then teaches using relevancy factors to classify programming content to give a system a more comprehensive way to identify the content that a program contains (see col. 7, lines 52-60 and fig. 1A). When presented with these teachings found in

Art Unit: 2623

Abecassis, a practitioner of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify the system disclosed by Bedard to adjust the counter incrementing means to increment according to this relevance factor taught by Abecassis, as it provides a more comprehensive way to identify content. As shown in fig. 1A of Abecassis, the relevancy factors give an indication as to what degree of different categories of content types are present in a program. Bedard teaches giving each category and subcategory an equal weight of 1, incrementing by time watched regardless of the relative degree of content that falls under the categories. Abecassis clearly shows a means for accurately evaluating this degree, and thus one of ordinary skill in the art is motivated to increment each category and subcategory by a relevancy factor of the type found taught in Abecassis, and resulting in an improved system which more accurately tracks viewer preferences.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 3-9, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bedard (5,801,747, listed on the IDS submitted April 15, 2005) in view of Smith et al. (EP 1 091 581 A2, of record) [Smith], Abecassis (5,610,653, of record), and Hancock et al. (6,701,523, of record) [Hancock].

Regarding claims 1 and 23, Bedard discloses a system for generating a list of suggested scheduled television programs (col. 3, lines 26-56) comprising:

means for receiving television program schedule data comprising broadcast time and characteristics of scheduled programs (an inherent feature of the Bedard disclosure, as the schedule data comprises broadcast times required for displaying the data displayed in figs. 4 and 5 and characteristic data used for populating the list shown in fig. 2, col. 4, lines 49-65);

means for receiving characteristics data for a television program being viewed by a user (col. 3, lines 33-38);

means for storing a table of characteristic weights for a user (fig. 2);

means for periodically incrementing characteristic weights in said table based on said characteristics data for said television program viewing viewed by said user (col. 3 line 63 – col. 4 line 26 and col. 5, lines 34-48);

first user interface means (col. 3, lines 4-15) for requesting a list of suggested television programs scheduled to be broadcast (col. 7, lines 19-27);
and

processor means for generating said list of suggested television programs by sorting said schedule according to said characteristics of scheduled programs and said table of characteristics weights for said user (col. 7, lines 19-27).

Bedard fails to disclose means for storing a characteristics relevancy factor and the periodic incrementing of characteristic weights includes considering a characteristics relevancy factor, selecting a future time period for

displaying suggested television programs scheduled to be broadcast during said future time period, and a second user interface means for selecting between a first mode wherein a television program having a plurality of characteristics wherein at least one of said plurality of characteristics has a zero weight in said table of characteristic weights for a user is included in said list of suggested television programs, and a second mode wherein a television program having at least one characteristic which has a zero weight in said table is not included in said list of suggested television programs.

In an analogous art, Smith teaches an electronic program guide wherein users are provided with the option to view future programming, allowing users to plan their viewing schedule in advance (paragraph 14).

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system disclosed by Bedard to include in the user interface a means for selecting a future time period, as taught by Smith, for the benefit of allowing users to plan their viewing schedule well ahead of time.

Bedard and Smith fail to disclose means for storing a characteristics relevancy factor and the periodic incrementing of characteristic weights includes considering a characteristics relevancy factor, and a second user interface means for selecting between a first mode wherein a television program having a plurality of characteristics wherein at least one of said plurality of characteristics has a zero weight in said table of characteristic weights for a user is included in said list of suggested television programs, and a second mode wherein a

television program having at least one characteristic which has a zero weight in said table is not included in said list of suggested television programs.

In an analogous art, Abecassis teaches a system that utilizes viewer content preferences to select content (col. 9, lines 8-19) wherein characteristics of programming include relevancy data (each category includes a coding scale relating the relevancy of that category to the programming content in question, shown in fig. 1a, col. 7, lines 52-60), providing the benefit of a more descriptive and accurate methodology for classifying content (col. 8, lines 1-34).

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system disclosed by Bedard and Smith to include relevancy data with said characteristics data, as taught by Abecassis, providing the benefit of a more descriptive and accurate methodology for classifying and subsequently selecting content.

Bedard, Smith, and Abecassis fail to disclose a second user interface means for selecting between a first mode wherein a television program having a plurality of characteristics wherein at least one of said plurality of characteristics has a zero weight in said table of characteristic weights for a user is included in said list of suggested television programs, and a second mode wherein a television program having at least one characteristic which has a zero weight in said table is not included in said list of suggested television programs.

In an analogous art, Hancock teaches a program guide user interface (fig. 2) wherein two alternate modes are selectable using said user interface means

Art Unit: 2623

(blocking and unblocking of programs based on ratings and content codes, col. 9 line 40 – col. 10 line 21), wherein if a first mode is selected (unblocked rating or content code), programs with a particular characteristic are allowed to be viewed (a viewer is allowed to view programs that include unblocked ratings or content codes), and if the second of said modes is selected (blocked rating or content code), programs having a particular characteristic are not allowed to be viewed (a viewer is not allowed to view programs that include blocked ratings or content codes), providing a dynamic form of control over what types of content are allowed to be watched by certain viewers (col. 9, lines 40-46).

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system disclosed by Bedard, Smith, and Abecassis to include a second interface wherein two alternate modes which are selectable using said user interface means wherein if a first mode is selected, a program having a plurality of characteristics wherein at least one of said plurality of characteristics has a zero weight (characteristics not ordinarily used in selecting programming, such as MPAA rating or content codes, are ignored by the program suggestion engine taught by Bedard, and are thus considered 'zero weight' characteristics, because they ordinarily have no weight in the selection process) in said table of characteristic weights for a user are included in a list of suggested programs (viewable) and if the second of said modes is selected, a program having at least one characteristic which has a zero weight in said table is not included in the list (as it contains a 'zero weight' characteristic that has been blocked), as taught by

Hancock, for the benefit of providing a dynamic form of control over what types of content are allowed to be watched by certain viewers, such as a parent restricting what types of programming are viewable by children.

Regarding claim 3, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 1, wherein Bedard discloses the characteristics are categories and subcategories (which are equivalent to Topic and Theme, col. 4, lines 49-65) but fail to disclose wherein if said first mode is selected, the average weights for a plurality of categories (Topics) in a program are added in calculating a program weight.

Examiner takes official notice that it is notoriously well known in the art to utilize averages in filtering algorithms, as an average of several factors provides a simpler and more reliable gauge for selecting an item when dealing with a number of factors associated with each item.

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art modify the system of Bedard, Smith, Abecassis and Hancock to add up the average weights of each category (Topic) in calculating a program's weight, for the benefit of using a simpler and more reliable gauge for selecting programs, as averaging the subcategories of each category gives a more realistic deciding factor for the filtering algorithm when it adds the categories.

Regarding claim 4, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 1, wherein said first of said modes is a default mode and said second of the two modes can be selected at the user interface (Hancock teaches the unblocked mode is the default, as the second mode, blocking, is something that must be first accessed by the Master/Administrator in order to select, col. 9, lines 40-58).

Regarding claim 5, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 1, wherein said future time period is determined by a user selected start and stop time (the EPG has a default span of 2 hours, shown in fig. 1 of Smith, wherein the times are user selectable in that the user selects the start time [future time period] and the stop time is 2 hours after this start time, and this done by "advancing" the guide, paragraph 14).

Regarding claim 6, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 4, but fail to disclose including user interface means for saving a selected future time period as a default.

Examiner takes official notice that it is notoriously well known in the art to save default settings in programs manipulated by users, allowing users to save preferred settings for each subsequent use of the program.

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system disclosed by Bedard, Smith, and Hancock to include

Art Unit: 2623

user interface means for saving a selected future time period as a default, for the benefit of allowing a user to save the preferred future time period for automatic use during subsequent uses of the system.

Regarding claim 7, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 1, wherein said characteristics are Topic and Theme (Bedard, category is equivalent to topic and subcategory is equivalent to theme, col. 4, lines 49-65), and said characteristic weights are the sum of the number of time periods a program having a Topic_Theme is viewed by a user (Bedard, col. 3 line 63 – col. 4 line 14 and col. 4, lines 49-65). Further, the combination results in said characteristic weights are the sum of the number of time periods a program having a Topic_Theme is viewed by a user times the characteristics relevancy factor of said Topic_Theme, as the relevancy data added is expressly for the purpose of providing a preference filtering algorithm with information regarding how much of a particular characteristic is found with a particular program.

Regarding claim 8, Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock disclose the system of claim 1, including means to identify one of a plurality of users (Bedard, col. 3, lines 49-52) and to store a mode selection of said user identified in a user profile (Bedard, storage of locking or time restriction information for each user, col. 3, lines 52-55).

Art Unit: 2623

Regarding claim 9, Smith additionally discloses adding listed programs to a user plan to view list (paragraph 15), for the benefit of allowing users to store programming for viewing that is not yet available.

It would have been obvious at the time to a person of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the system disclosed by Bedard, Smith, Abecassis, and Hancock to include adding listed programs to a user plan to view list, as taught by Smith, for the benefit of allowing users to store programming for viewing that is not yet available.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 11-14, 16-18, and 20-22 are allowed.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Brown et al. (6,973,663) and Killian (EP 0 854 645 A2).

7. The following are suggested formats for either a Certificate of Mailing or Certificate of Transmission under 37 CFR 1.8(a). The certification may be included with all correspondence concerning this application or proceeding to establish a date of mailing or transmission under 37 CFR 1.8(a). Proper use of this procedure will result in such communication being considered as timely if the established date is within the required period for reply. The Certificate should be signed by the individual actually depositing or transmitting the correspondence or by an individual who, upon information and belief, expects the correspondence to be mailed or transmitted in the normal course of business by another no later than the date indicated.

Art Unit: 2623

Certificate of Mailing

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

on _____
(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

Signature: _____

Registration Number: _____

Certificate of Transmission

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Fax No. () _____ - _____ on _____
(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

Signature: _____

Registration Number: _____

Please refer to 37 CFR 1.6(d) and 1.8(a)(2) for filing limitations concerning facsimile transmissions and mailing, respectively.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dominic D. Saltarelli whose telephone number is (571) 272-7302. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 7:00am - 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Miller can be reached on (571) 272-7353. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Dominic Saltarelli
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2611

DS


JOHN MILLER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600